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## THANKSGIVING -- SHARING THE JOY, SHARING THE PAIN

by Toshihiro Tom Takami as told to Lee Seaman

Asian Rural Institute celebrated its third thanksgiving recently. The Open House focused on Food, Human Rights, and Technology -- and on the hunger, oppression and dehumanization which bounds the quality of human life in much of the Third World. Nearly 1000 visitors toured the buildings, bought hand-smoked chicken and ham, munched meatless snacks from Malaysia and Bangladesh, and stared at a shanty made by participants from scraps of cardboard and bits of wood. "It's so much better than what most people at home have," murmured one Indian as he put the shanty together. The cardboard was thick, the wood strong -- Japan is wealthy even in its refuse. "They must be very lazy to live like that," a middle-aged Japanese commented, "Why don't they work hard and get something better?"

For earlier articles on Asian Rural Institute, see JCAN #460, Sept. 27, 1974, and #427, Feb. 23, 1973.

-- Eds.

### What is Asian Rural Institute?

The Asian population is still about 80% rural. They are mostly farmers, mostly poor, often hungry. We believe that they are more than an object of "population control," more than a problem for the rest of the world. They are human beings. The way they live, preserving a centuries' old cultural heritage, and their enormous patience under the burden of natural and social disasters and accompanying injustices, greatly helps their countries and communities to remain intact. These people still share their limited resources with their poor and hungry neighbors, a virtue which people of affluent societies are fast forgetting. The rural poor may well hold the hope for our future world.

Asia--and the world today--faces increasingly serious crises of hunger, population explosion, pollution and social injustice. We cannot solve these crises humanely until the rural people creatively participate in finding solutions. But this will not happen until these people realise their own worth and have some motivation to participate.

At Asian Rural Institute we are working to build grassroots leadership in Asia to further this participation. Rural community leaders from Korea and South-east and South Asia come for study, usually from March to December because winters here are cold. Some go from here to work with Japanese farm families for 2 or 3 months. Then they return to their own communities to work where they are trusted by the people. They try to introduce some little changes, like hand-built chicken cages for more efficient egg production, or pens to keep the pigs from roaming around the village, or a compost heap to free the rice and vegetable farmers from buying expensive imported fertilizers. These are things the people can do themselves or with their neighbors. They don't have to depend on some powerful, wealthy outside source. This is the first step for really placing power in the hands of the people -- getting them to participate in the decisions which control their daily lives.

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## THANKSGIVING (cont'd)

Why do you bring these people to Japan? Why not send Japanese experts to their villages to teach there?

We do that, too... ARI has sent two couples under ecumenical and Kyodan sponsorship, to rural Asia, and they are working with our graduates right now. But the participants here -- that includes all of us on the staff, too -- learn a lot more than production methods. We talk about producing and sharing food, using energy, preventing waste, processing foods, setting up cottage industries like weaving and bamboo crafts. But we also look at people's organizations. For example they wouldn't be able to observe Japan's highly successful farm cooperatives if they were at home.

We discuss teamwork, and then we try it, all of us from different countries and with different feelings about leadership. Then we talk about what was difficult. In Western countries, children are taught from primary school to make decisions, set up goals and then work together or separately on them. But many Asians have had very little experience in setting up projects themselves. The thanksgiving celebration and open house was a group project. They all expected me to tell them what to do, and I wouldn't, so they planned and did it all themselves. It was a sort of laboratory in community organization.

They are impressed with Japanese farms, where the women work right along with the men. That isn't done in many of their own countries. The children go to school, but before and after classes and during vacations they help on the farm. Japanese government agricultural specialists with their nice suits and college diplomas come right out into the fields and get mud on their hands, working directly with the farmers and even taking notes on what the farmers are doing. Where most of our participants come from, the government expert sits at his desk in the city, the people come to him, and he answers their questions. It may take two or three days to get to the city, and then often he uses words they can't understand.

How does this thanksgiving celebration tie in with what you are doing at ARI?

Thanksgiving is a fundamental part of life in rural areas, where people are close to the soil and giving thanks seems natural. The rural poor are grateful for the little they have. But the rich, it seems, live only for getting more. In Japan and other affluent urban societies we are fast losing the custom of thanksgiving. It has become nothing more than a national holiday, a friendly get-together. We have forgotten how to give thanks as a part of the family of man.

The Christian understanding of thanksgiving goes beyond an abundant harvest. It means bearing burdens together and being willing to work with and for others, especially the world's poor and hungry. It means sharing the joy, but also sharing the pain. Thanksgiving then becomes much more than a friendly get-together. It comes from participating fully in the year's work and then rejoicing together in the results.

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LOOKING FOR A CHRISTMAS GIFT? How about a year of alternative news from Japan? JCAN presents the story behind the story on Japan-related news in Asia. ¥1500 in Japan, \$8.00 overseas airmail, \$6.00 overseas seemail. Please add ¥200 or \$.70 for handling charge on checks.



KOREANS FROM JAPAN ACCUSED OF 'SPYING'

Eleven Koreans from Japan, including Kim Chul Hyun, a member of the Korean Christian Church in Japan (KCCJ), are among 21 persons accused by the south Korean government of being "north Korean spies." In a November 22 announcement in Seoul, the south Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) alleged that the 21 were working under north Korean communist instructions to penetrate campus circles in south Korea, contact military officers, stir up anti-government feelings, and take action in case of a military coup.

Seventeen of the 21, including several Christians, were students at Seoul National University and Pusan University. The alleged "spies" are also accused of infiltrating Christian Churches and "carrying on subversive activities" at two theological seminaries in Seoul. By uncovering the "spy ring", the KCIA said it has "proved" that north Korean agents have been behind the campus and church struggles for restoration of democracy and human rights in recent years.

The case is probably the biggest shock to date to Korean Christian churches and schools already hard-hit by mass arrests, imprisonment of top church officials and constant KCIA harassment. This is the first time, however, that the KCCJ has been implicated in spy charges which, under south Korean Anti-Communist Laws, could bring life imprisonment or a death sentence for Kim Chul Hyun.

Kim, a graduate of Doshisha University in Kyoto, was doing post-graduate study in Korean church history at Hankuk Theological Seminary in Seoul until he was picked up and detained by the KCIA on October 15 (see JCAN, November 13, page two). Described as a "brilliant student" and a follower of German theologian Jurgen Moltmann, Kim went to Hankuk as part of a KCCJ program to provide promising future pastors with language, history and theological training.

According to KCIA charges, Kim departed from Japan March 9, 1975, and went to north Korea where he stayed for 80 days; he was trained as a spy and then instructed by the communists to enter south Korea, organize an anti-Yushin (Yushin is the present constitutional set-up, called "revitalizing reforms" by the government) uprising, and overthrow the Park Chung-Hee government.

To Kim's family, his local congregation, and the KCCJ as a whole, the KCIA accusations are both shocking and incredible. Upon hearing the charges, Rev. Kim, Won Chi, Moderator of the KCCJ, called an emergency meeting of the KCCJ Executive Committee to discuss "this most serious matter."

Meeting in Osaka November 25, the Executive Committee heard reports from two KCCJ pastors sent to Seoul to investigate the case and decided to mobilize the whole church to exercise pastoral responsibility and gain Kim Chul Hyun's release. A "Special Committee of the KCCJ to Rescue Kim Chul Hyun" was established with nine members who represent all the KCCJ districts and leading committees. Rev. Hong Young Gi, pastor of the Mukogawa Church in Amagasaki where Kim grew up, is chairman of the special committee.

One of the committee's tasks is to find irrefutable proof that Kim could not possibly have gone to north Korea. Since south Korean courts today have their own peculiar *modus operandi*, photographs and statements by Kim's friends would most certainly be dismissed by the judges.

"This is a great challenge to the Korean Christian Church in Japan," a church official told JCAN. "We have to prove that our church stands together as a church of Christ in these hard times." When asked about the background of the case, the official said, "It seems clear to us that Hankuk Seminary has been one of the major government targets all year. The government's purpose now is to hit it

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KIM (cont'd)

hard and it has chosen Kim and his three seminary friends as its vehicle."

Observers point out that the arrest of 11 Koreans from Japan is also intended to pressure the Japanese government into regulating or controlling the politically-related activities of the 600,000 Koreans in Japan. This has been a sore point in Tokyo-Seoul relations since a Korean resident of Japan tried to assassinate President Park in August, 1974.

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#### WOMEN'S GROUPS MEET IN TOKYO

by Aiko Carter

Under the slogans, "Eliminate sex discrimination and strengthen women's power," 41 citizens' groups gathered at the Kanda Kyoritsu Hall on November 22. About 2300 people participated in the rally marking International Women's Year. Among the organizations represented were the Japan YWCA, the Women's Committee of the National Christian Council of Japan, and Japan Catholic Church women.

A visual multi-media presentation, "Footsteps of Japanese Women," helped greatly to unite participants in recognizing the importance of women's status in society. The presentation showed the history of the women's movement starting from the oppression of women in the Meiji era.

Participants heard reports of the actual situations of women in politics, education, labor, the home and social welfare. Aiming at the government, administrative bodies, political parties, the business world and labor unions, they demanded actual realization of the equality for women promised in the Constitution. The constitutional guarantee today is treated only as a sort of decoration, they charged, and is not taken seriously. They called for truly equal status for women to be vigorously pursued in every field. Ichikawa Fusae, chairperson of the standing committee, proposed a citizen's cooperative committee to watch future government action in relation to women's status. After the three-hour rally, participants went out into rainy streets to demonstrate their will and conviction in unity.

The rally came as a climax for those who had struggled through the past oppressive years when women's movements were prohibited by law. But many younger women's groups failed to participate in the rally, saying it seemed rather old fashioned. The conference was planned to find mutual grounds for exchange of experience among the various participating groups, and so the basic issue was the equality of women and men. Discussion did not touch on topics of central interest to many younger women's groups, which have formed around particular issues such as abortion, prostitution in Asia and its relation to Japanese tourism, world peace as opposed to nuclear power and the US military presence in Japan, and the Emperor system.

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FLASH----Emperor Hirohito and the Empress paid a surprise visit to Yasukuni Shrine on Nov. 21. The shrine has been embroiled in controversy over its re-nationalization since 1969. Although billed as a "private visit", the NCCJ and other groups denounced the deed. On Nov. 19th a statement issued by the NCCJ Yasukuni Committee protested that the Emperor's act is legitimizing rightists' demands for nationalization. Among the people at the shrine were 70 Christians present to protest the visit. In spite of very tight security a few were able to display their banners of opposition.



The bell of freedom in truth, and John's clarion call for the people to straighten the way for the Lord are themes struck here in an appeal for awareness of and support of the families of persons detained or imprisoned in the Republic of Korea under Presidential Decrees.

Winter is bitterly cold in Korea, and the prisoners and families, and those previously prosecuted and marked, are in dire straits, facing physical and social deprivation. Concerned people of faith and conscience in Korea and Japan are again raising assistance for the families, who were greatly encouraged by the sleeping-bags, Christmas cards and aid sent last year.

As you enjoy the goodness of Christmas, will you please remember Korean political prisoners and their families? Greetings and support for them can be sent care of Human Rights Committee Korean National Christian Council 46-136, Yuenji Dong, Chongro-ku Seoul, Republic of Korea Winter ends about March! Christmas is everyday!

Merry  
Christmas  
Happy  
New Year



謹賀新年

길을 곧게하라... 외치는 자의 소리...

*The voice of one crying... Make straight the way...*

道をまっすぐにせよ... 呼ばれる者の声...

(Cry of the People Committee and Amnesty International)

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CLIPPING FROM THE JAPANESE PRESS

compiled by C. Koriyama

translated by Akiko Yamaguchi and Connie Gale

THE CHURCH IN AN APARTMENT HOUSE--It has become very difficult for the Japanese Church to purchase land for church buildings due to high land prices and public regulations. In the last 10 years the price of land in the Tokyo area has skyrocketed due to concentration of population in the cities and to speculative buying by big businesses that foresaw Tokyoites move to the suburbs. Another problem comes from a Japan Housing Corporation (Kodan) regulation which prohibits religious buildings in Kodan public housing areas. Facing these problems, the Tokyo Diocese of the Catholic Church recently opened a church in a small apartment near Tama New Town, a western, upper-middle-class suburb of Tokyo. Archbishop Peter Shiroyanagi of the Japan Catholic Church pointed out that this is the only Catholic Church in Japan without a church building. In October 1971, soon after New Town opened, a few Catholics gathered together for services at the home of one member. This was the beginning of Tama Church. Father Hideo Teranishi, assigned to the New Town area in 1972, questioned whether having a church building was necessary or even feasible. Raising money for a church building would be a financial burden on the congregation, mostly young families with large housing loans. Father Teranishi also questioned whether it was meaningful to build a large building which is only used once a week. The answer was not to "have a building" but "have a church" in an apartment house.

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CLIPPINGS (cont'd)

OVER 2,000,000 COLLEGE STUDENTS IN JAPAN--The number of college students in Japan has finally surpassed the 2 million mark. According to the Japanese Ministry of Education (Mombusho) there were 2,088,000 students as of April, 1975. This number includes junior colleges as well as regular 4-year colleges and universities. In 1965 there were just over one million students; thus the numbers have doubled in the last 10 years. The number of students studying for masters degrees has also doubled, but Ph. D. students have only increased 1.3 times. There are 420 colleges and universities in Japan including 81 national universities, 34 public colleges such as city and prefectural colleges, and 305 private universities. The 4-year colleges are outnumbered by junior colleges, which total 513. This includes 31 national junior colleges, 48 public junior colleges and 434 private junior colleges. The ratio of female to male students is 1 to 5; however, if junior colleges are included the ratio increases to 1 to 3.

EMPEROR'S HISTORIC 1ST MEETING WITH THE PRESS--In his first meeting with members of the Japanese press, other than members of the exclusive Imperial Household Agency press club, the Emperor said he doubted whether he would be able to come into the same carefree contact with his own people as he and the Empress did last month with the American public.

In answer to a question about the atom-bombing of Hiroshima toward the end of the Second World War, the Emperor expressed sympathy for the victims of the bombing and said: "Although I think it is regrettable that the bomb was dropped and feel deeply sorry for the citizens of Hiroshima, it happened during war and could not be helped."

When asked if he had anything to say to the numerous Japanese who lost their loved ones in the war and who helped achieve a remarkable recovery of the nation after the war, he replied, "My heart aches each year on August 15," (the day Japan surrendered) adding he was pleased that people who have suffered so much, "have contributed much to the (postwar) development of the nation."

The conference room momentarily froze when the Emperor was asked if his statement at a White House banquet during his US visit--that the Second World War was a "most unfortunate war, which I deeply deplore"--could be interpreted to mean he felt responsibility for the war.

This was the first time the Emperor had been directly asked by the Japanese press about his responsibility for the war. It marked a significant breakthrough in a taboo long observed by the press here. The Emperor sat up straight in his chair and replied: "Since I am not well versed in literature and have not studied the nuance of the words (he had used at the White House), I cannot answer that question."

(from the Asahi Evening News)